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Cultural Foundations  
in Education

**SPIRITUAL FITNESS AND RESILIENCE FORMATION THROUGH ARMY  
CHAPLAINS AND RELIGIOUS SUPPORT (237 pp.)**

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Catalyzed by my observations as a U.S. Army Chaplain dealing suicide in the military across the past decade, in this study, I explore and more clearly conceptualize social processes of spiritual fitness and resilience formation in a context of plurality. Guiding questions include: Why do some become suicidal through suffering, while others experience “post-traumatic growth” instead? And if this capacity is a product of resilience, how is such a resilience formed?

My research through this interdisciplinary study of literatures of spiritual and social formation through education, has identified three facets of this formation process, entailing 1) socially formed 2) frameworks of meaning 3) that become resilient habitus and habits of mind only through habitual practice, often requiring broad social support, as opposed to being the individual processes often thought. I argue that the integrated components of religious and civic formation, once central to resilience formation through American public education, are now largely ineffective, and have yet to be effectively replaced.

It is that process of formation, cultivation and reinforcement of a core of spiritual fitness in resilience which the research of this dissertation is intended to explore and develop. Potential legal ramifications when the language of spiritual fitness is used by

public institutions such as the U.S. Army, are also addressed. Army Chaplains have effectively fostered pluralistic models of resilience formation and reinforcement through religious support since before the birth of the United States, uniquely equipping Chaplains as resources for intentional spiritual fitness and resilience formation in the pluralistic context.

*Keywords: spiritual fitness, formation, Army suicide, secular age, social formation, spiritual formation, personal formation, socio-cultural change, Constantinian Christian culture, habits of mind, habitus, Chaplaincy, Army Chaplains, Army Chaplain history, Religious Support, pluralism, religious diversity, plurality, resilience, accidie, freedom of religion, First Amendment, Constitutional protections, Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, establishment of religion, overlapping consensus, comprehensive doctrines*